

MEGALITHS and IDENTITIES



DFG Schwerpunktprogramm 1400

Frühe Monumentalität und soziale Differenzierung 1

Edited by

**Martin Furholt
Friedrich Lüth
Johannes Müller**

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und soziale Differenzierung**

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Megaliths and Identities

Early Monuments and Neolithic Societies
from the Atlantic to the Baltic

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Edited by Martin Furholt
Friedrich Lüth
Johannes Müller



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Introduction

Martin Furholt, Friedrich Lüth and Johannes Müller

By choosing „Megaliths and Identities“ as the main topic of the third meeting of the European Megalithic Studies Group one could be blamed for risking a loss of focus, for opening up for a much too diverse and divergent set of papers. The concept of identity has several dimensions, and naturally there is no clear boundary to be set regarding the aspects and topics that could be connected to any of these different layers of the identity-concept which permeates every sphere of human conduct.

On the other hand, in archaeology, and especially in the study of Neolithic monuments, there has been a clear concentration on distinct aspects of identity. These aspects may be grouped into three blocks, reflected by the general chapters of this volume. Of course, the grouping of papers is not more than a rough attempt, as in many cases several aspects of identity are discussed.

In the first chapter the papers concentrate on the identification of the monuments themselves. The second chapter brings together papers dealing with the role of the monuments in the creation and maintenance of Neolithic collective and personal identities. The third chapter assembles papers treating the question of social structures and their dynamics. The scope of those papers is either the role different social groups play in the construction of monuments, or conversely the role of megaliths in the social processes.

The meeting was organised at an early stage of the Priority Program “Early Monumentality and Social Differentiation”, a research collaboration financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG, SPP 1400, and it had the aim of both introducing this major research effort to the international community, as well as locating the underlying agenda within the European context of megalithic and Neolithic research. As the European Megalithic Studies Group is an informal assembly of international scientists, the proposal of such a potentially broad topic as “Megaliths and Identities” gives the opportunity to assemble a spectrum reflecting the different current working agendas under a common flag that sets certain limits, without narrowing down the variability of approaches and perspectives actually present. The goal was to assemble and commu-

nicate rather than to approach a joint investigation of distinct research questions.

The volume starts with a supra-regional and diachronic attempt by Martin Furholt and Johannes Müller, who try to set the development of monumental architecture in the context of European social structures from, roughly, 5000 BC to 3000 BC and thus to frame the following papers by a larger narrative, which is, naturally, determined by the authors’ perspective towards monumentality and social systems.

In the first section, the papers concentrate on the monument’s identities. Timothy Darvill starts out with a discussion on the identity of megalithic monuments as opposed to non-megalithic ones and highlights combinations of different materials consciously selected by the builders. He suggests a distinct set of meanings for those materials, which he finally integrates into the sketch of a cosmological model. Richard Bradley touches on two different layers of identity, as he discusses the identity of standing stones as anthropomorphic representations and interprets the possible semantic similarity of monuments on both sides of the Irish Sea as an indication for a shared identity. In a somehow similar dual approach, Chris Scarre searches to identify both the identity of the monuments on the Channel Islands and the connected identities of people on the Islands and the French mainland by interpreting these structure’s layout and identity-shaping activities. Muiris O’Sullivan locates the identity of monuments as part of mythological landscapes, which he tries to approach through analogies to more recent Irish folklore. Doris Mischka describes the biography of the Flintbek LA3 Long Barrow, which underwent a complex history, seeing different marked changes in shape and identity.

In the second section, the spectrum ranges from the consideration of monument-building as an integrative, identity-shaping activity, to the discussion of the personal and social identities of individuals buried in different grave monuments, to the attempts to reconstruct the social structure of the living societies erecting and using the megaliths, and to the question of regionally bound identities and ethnicity. Martin Furholt highlights the differ-

ence between the early Neolithic period in Northern Central Europe as compared to the Late Early and Middle Neolithic periods and argues for a quantitative approach that connects the realisation of Neolithic identities to the scale of behavioural changes, most markedly materialised in the megalithic activities after 3500 BC. Martin Hinz discusses the structure of burial societies in the megaliths and tries to test different models against the data and our knowledge from living societies. Magdalena Midgley punctuates the variety of burial practises, often undervalued, and explores different identities connected to this variety. Niels H. Andersen and Karl-Göran Sjögren deal with two especially well-examined regions, the Sarup Area in Denmark and Falbygden in Sweden, discussing the – explicitly different – behavioural patterns connected to the respective monuments. Despite the differences between monument forms and activities connected, the special role of these key regions as foci of Neolithic identities seems to be quite similar. Constanze Rassmann explores similarities between the regions of southern Scandinavia, northern Germany and the British Isles with regards to the phenomenon of Earthen Long Barrows. This enables her to identify both regional and supra-regional patterns that concern different, partly overlapping spheres of identity expressed in monumental activities. Kerstin Schierhold discusses the role of different spheres of identity connected to the Western German Gallery Graves and emphasises small-scale variations. Sławomir Kadrow explores the south-eastern Polish evidence and identifies two main social strategies connected to a “Danubian” tradition as opposed to a Funnel Beaker strategy involving burial monuments derived from the megalithic tradition.

Luc Laporte is placed in the second part of the volume, because he stresses the presence of multiple identities in the early north-western monuments expressed by a multiplicity of contemporary forms of monuments. He challenges the distinc-

tiveness of different monument types and points to the processuality of different construction phases, often lacking unilinear, preconceived building plans. His paper should, however, additionally be considered in connection to the ones of Cassen et al. and Chambon / Thomas, together forming a lively debate around the early French monuments.

At the start of the third chapter, Serge Cassen et al. give an account of the earliest Neolithic monuments in Western France and argue for the presence of a marked social stratification expressed in these structures. Philippe Chambon and Aline Thomas identify different basic, recurrent patterns in the earliest monuments in northern central France which they interpret as a means to express social status identities. They argue for recurrent social positions emphasising gender roles and drawing on hunting-related symbols.

The third chapter continues with two papers dealing with the possibilities to identify social differentiation through the study of Funnel Beaker graves. Jan Albert Bakker gives an account of spatial and chronological diversity within the whole region containing Funnel Beaker material, concluding that this diversity obscures social differences. Johannes Müller concentrates on the North Friesian Islands as a key region and tries to demonstrate the possibilities of social analysis of different grave types and grave furniture categories through a quantitative analysis based on the evidence treated from a materialistic perspective, which he merges into a model of social change that takes into account minimum surplus production and indications for conflict and violence, masked by the display of a “ritual collectivity”. Mike Parker Pearson and Christie Cox Willis use the osteological investigations of cremated burials in Stonehenge to point out a group of socially and politically powerful individuals connected to this extraordinary monument complex.

The leitmotifs in this volume

Thus, regarding the three central themes proposed in this volume, some general threads may be identified from our, the editors, perspective. To start, the idea of standing stones, even of megalithic barrows' kerbstones as anthropomorphic representations seem to evoke the parallel of these European Neolithic monuments to the possibly archetypically earliest monuments in Göbekli Tepe. It seems as if such an association is a recurrent, maybe even anthropologically determined, motive. In this way, many of the megalithic structures would have represented gatherings of people, directed towards the grave as a focal point within. Such semantic contents of the megalithic structures would go well

with the pragmatic conclusion that the syntax of the graves' layout in general may be seen as indications – or indices in a Peircian sense – of the social structure of the people building it (see Furholt / Müller, this volume). By describing the identity of the graves, all authors more or less explicitly refer to the structure of the social groups involved. A variety of social identities and variants of their expression is described in the second chapter, but the monument, be it megalith, long barrow or enclosure, is repeatedly described as an arena for the creation and performance of identities – a clear and prominent common leitmotif. There is debate about the pronunciation of small-scale diversity versus su-

pra-regional trends, but some overall observations are to be made out. Regarding social systems, especially the early French evidence evokes the notion of more stratified societies, which go together with more elaborate monuments. The Stonehenge example gives a corresponding picture, in the direction of an elaborate overall organisation, this time in a later period.

Turning from Western Europe to northern Central Europe and Southern Scandinavia, a clear contrast seems to be visible. A generally much less organised or stratified society corresponds to the overall simplicity of monuments. This lack of political organisation or social hierarchisation does not mean, however, an absence of a considerable variability and thus complexity of social relations. It also seems possible to identify developmental trends, for example from simpler (but more numer-

ous) dolmens to more elaborate (but fewer) passage graves, interpreted as being connected to a rise in social conflicts, but this has to be seen in relation to much more distinct patterns in the west, and we find this difference striking.

The papers in this volume, no surprise, show diverse approaches and evoke different narratives. It is a question of perspective, whether the one laid out here will be found convincing. We, the editors, have grouped the papers around some central themes which we think can be synthesised into one narrative that is connected to the topic of our current research agenda of “Early Monumentality and Social Differentiation”. We are sure that the authors, and surely many readers, would rather emphasise other aspects of this volume and thus tell another story, but this is all to the good.

The earliest monuments in Europe – architecture and social structures (5000-3000 cal BC)

Martin Furholt and Johannes Müller

Zusammenfassung

Zunächst wird das Konzept des Monuments in zwei Richtungen diskutiert, einmal im Hinblick auf die Rolle solcher Strukturen bei der Bildung und Aufrechterhaltung sozialer Gruppen durch die Reproduktion und Stabilisierung eines kulturellen Gedächtnisses in vorschriftlichen Gesellschaften, andererseits wird die Gestalt monumentaler Strukturen, da sie sich auf den Akt (oder Prozess) der Erbauung zurückführen lässt, als indexikalisches Zeichen aufgefasst, welches auf die Struktur

und Organisationsform der erbauenden Gesellschaft verweist. Unter dieser Prämisse wird eine diachrone Betrachtung der frühesten Monumente Europas angestellt, angefangen mit den bandkeramischen Erdwerken bis hin zu den armorischen und nordeuropäischen Hügeln und Megalithen, mit dem Ziel auf diese Weise die Entwicklung sozialer Strukturen vom 5. bis zum 4. Jahrtausend cal BC in Nordwest- Mittel- und Nordeuropa zusammenfassend zu diskutieren.

Abstract

Firstly, the monument-concept is discussed concerning its role in creating and stabilising non-literate societies through the reproduction and conservation of social memories. Secondly, the monumental structure, referring to the act (or process) of monument-building, is interpreted as an indexical sign representing the structure and organisation of the social groups involved. Given this

premise, a survey through the earliest monuments in Europe, starting with the LBK enclosures and covering the Armorican and Northern European barrows and megaliths aims to summarise the development of social formations through the 5th and 4th millennium cal BC in Northwestern, Central and Northern Europe.

Megaliths and Identities: The Monument-Concept

All the articles in this volume share the consensus that the Neolithic megaliths and similar non-megalithic structures in Western, Northern and Central Europe are to be interpreted as monuments. With or without explicit references, this concept underlies the arguments towards the connection of these structures to social identity patterns. This implicit use of the monument-concept is rather widespread in archaeology, in social sciences and in colloquial language. Often, especially when the adjective form “monumental” is applied, the monument-concept is reduced to the notion of hugeness or colossality (FURHOLT et al. i. pr.). It is however evident, that colossality is not at the core of the monument-concept as it is used in archaeology. This is rather to be found in the semantic meaning of the Latin term from which monument derives, *monere*, that is *to remember*, or *to admonish*. It is obvious that, at least implicitly, a monument is usually identified, when a structure is interpreted as having a special social significance, as playing a special role in processes of social reproduction. We normally think of a monument as something that is not entirely to be explained by any functional need but shows a distinct quality that could be called a surplus of meaning. As soon as it is possible to, for example, interpret a ditch- and palisade system as a fortification for a settlement, most colleagues would reject the notion of a monument. In many cases, especially in more recent memorial places, a surplus of meaning is realised by iconic signs or written text, or by a non-functional colossality. It might be achieved through a unique form, a distinguished, pre-eminent position in the landscape, and / or an outstanding elaboration may be interpreted as means to create such a surplus of meaning and to secure the impact of the intended remembrance and admonition.

Monuments are to be seen as structures with collective referents, with a clear visibility. Again, the semantics of the Latin term *monere*, hints at the second crucial aspect of the core of the monument-concept: Monuments are not only vehicles for the storage and communication of meaning, but they are also indispensable agents of the creation and maintenance of society. This is clearly reflected by two more recent approaches, both placing monuments into wider historical schemes. The first one is connected to a Middle Eastern archaeological interpretation of social and cognitive processes during the process of Neolithisation (CAUVIN 2000; WATKINS 2004). Monuments are seen as one aspect necessary to create stable social communities in constantly growing populations. As constant direct interactions become impossible, External Symbolic Storage Systems (DONALD 1991) are used, and rituals, symbolic artefacts and monuments secure

the maintenance of “institutional facts (SEARLE 1995)” through their involvement in communication networks of different scales (WATKINS 2009; WATKINS i. pr.). From this perspective, monuments are not only media of communication, but also admonishers of specific ways of doing things, of social identities.

This normative notion of monuments is even more pronounced in ASSMANN’S (1988; 1992) concept of Cultural Memories, widely used for the understanding of megaliths, especially in the German-speaking research (HOLTORF 1996; VEIT 2005; MÜLLER 2009; Furholt, this volume). In Assmann’s model, Cultural Memories constitute a distinct mode of memory that is of normative nature as it is connected to tales from the distant, mythical past. Cultural Memories, as opposed to the more fluid and lifeworldly Communicative Memories are supported by monuments and rituals being linked to or even constituting social identities and supporting political systems. It is important to acknowledge that this concept was popularised by an Egyptologist, induced from early state societies of the Middle East, and thus the political and ideological dimension is more marked than in the Cauvin-Watkins model of External Symbolic Storage Systems. Whereas Watkins reflects on the construction of society as such - the establishment and maintenance of social relations - Assmann sees Cultural Memories as a means to legitimise dominance and control (ASSMANN 1992, 71). Within such a political framework, Assmann sees collective activities in the framework of Cultural Memories as the root of collective identities and the formation of social units including – at the end of the spectrum – ethnic entities (ASSMANN 1992, 131 ff.).

Beside the described concepts of “memory” there are quite a lot more. Counting different levels of inquiry, from the individual to society, other attractive connotations of memory, related to the “biological lifespan” of individuals, the “social lifespan” (from before birth to death), and the “personal lifespan” of conscious individual time reception should be mentioned (summary: WHITTLE 2011). Quite often “social memory” concepts end up with the time span, in which a non-literate community is able to hold more or less unchanged memories valid and use them for societal stability. Here, archaeology comes into play and it was mainly Richard Bradley, who used the observation of historians (HENIGE 1974; VANSINA 1985) about the length of reliable memories for archaeology: “oral traditions can become unstable or even corrupt within two hundred years” (BRADLEY 2002, 8). Chains of information transfer have to be institutionalized es-

pecially by non-literate societies. Ethnographical examples display spans of up to 15-20 generations of general ancestry, but only three generations of individual genealogy knowledge (compare WHITTLE 2011). In this context Tim INGOLDS (2000) differentiation of genealogical identity and relational identity, involving “other” people and other things, might be of interest (INGOLD 2000). However, in a practical sense, Assmann’s “cultural memories” are incorporated into a realistic idea about “monumental” functions: monumentality is defined as the practice to stabilize a location visually for ancestors and after-comers and surely the living community’s “social memory”. This also gives us a clear cut idea of why the monuments were constructed: changes and instabilities, which have to be identified, made – example given – a “megalithic chain of memory transition” necessary. The “text in stone” had to be visible in order to stabilize the society in contrast to the changes happening.

All these models refer to the role of monuments as part of social activities constituting and recreating social identities. From a pragmatic position,

Different monuments, diverse Identities?

Northern Central Europe and
Southern Scandinavia

When we compare Neolithic monuments to more recent ones, of the classical times, or even modern memorial structures, but indeed also when we compare the Neolithic monuments of the Middle East with those of Northern, Central and Western Europe, there are marked differences in the material qualities of the monuments (see FURHOLT i. pr.).

Assmanns monuments, the agents of cultural memories in Early State Societies of the Middle East, legitimising highly hierarchic societies, are mostly colossal, elaborate structures with a pre-planned outlay, carried out by a highly specialised – and presumably numerous, but in itself also hierarchised – building team. The notion of planning a complex layout, the enormous work-load, and the breath-taking elaboration are indications of the highly specialised and hierarchised societies known from the early texts. The North Mesopotamian Middle Eastern Early Neolithic monuments, best represented by Göbekli Tepe (SCHMIDT 2000; 2006) indicate a comparably much smaller work-load – although incredibly high when measured against the cultural context of the preceding phases. Additionally, the degree of elaboration points towards an advanced state of specialisation. The basic layout of the monuments in Göbekli, but surely also in other places, like Karahan Tepe, Hamzan, Urfa Yeni Yol or the domestic site of Nevalı Çori

as advocated by MEAD (1973, 81 ff), both personal and collective identities are created through participation in meaningful interactions. Both Watkins and Assmann stress the important role of monuments and connected rituals for this process especially in early, non-literate societies. What is more, the very process of the construction of monuments is to be seen as a ritual, as a joint collective activity creating and fostering identification, creating and practicing social identities (FURHOLT et al. i. pr.). Thus, the layout and biography of any monumental building is to be seen as an indexical sign (in the Peircean sense) referring to the structure of social identities and organisational units involved in (and shaped by) the process. Although all monuments are – by definition – seen as outcomes of joint activities signalling distinct messages with a collective referent, different modes of organisation and dominance, different sizes of the groups participating, different degrees of specialisation and elaboration will result in different monumental activities. Thus, the differences between the material structures of monuments are to be seriously considered for the background of social identities.

(SCHMIDT 2006, 202 f.; MOETZ/ÇELİK i. pr.) point towards a preconceived plan and thus a coordinating authority. However, the overall plan of Göbekli Tepe with its cellular layout, where numerous small, and more or less equal circular (and later rectangular) structures are set beside each other, could be interpreted as corresponding to smaller, self-sufficient building teams, united by the common place, but still maintaining their autonomy.

Comparing the Northern and Western European megaliths – again erected by early sedentary societies – to these North Mesopotamian Middle Eastern monuments, a set of clear differences is again obvious. Here, we will start from the perspective of the Northern European monuments in Northern Central Europe and Southern Scandinavia, later turning to the Western European ones on the Armorican peninsulas.

The first point of comparison between Northern Central European/Southern Scandinavian and North Mesopotamian Middle Eastern monuments, is the size of the single structures. Apart from a select number of more colossal monuments – to which we will turn later – by far the majority of megaliths in the north are rather small in scale. This does not only apply to the megalithic chambers, but also to the earthen barrows connected to them. In the northern German province of Schleswig-Holstein, for example, the majority of round barrows measure between 5 and 10 meters in diameter (ROSS 1992, 135). The majority of long barrows

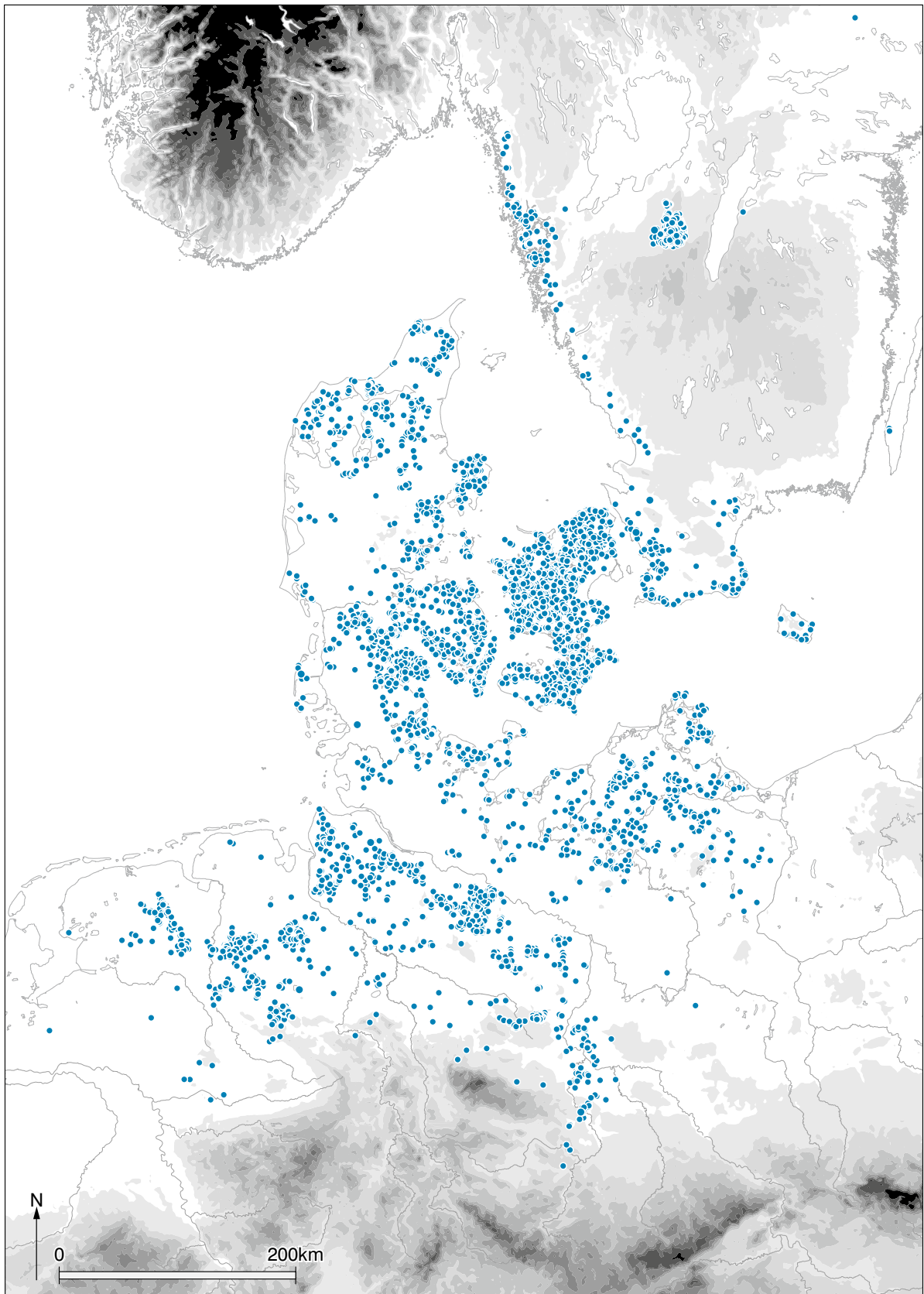


Fig. 1. The distribution of megaliths in Northern Central Europe and Southern Scandinavia (after FRITSCH et al. 2010).

measure between 20 and 40 meters length (ROSS 1992, 133). A sample from Denmark shows similar numbers, with a mean value of 5 m for round barrows and 25 m for long barrows (FURHOLT *i. pr.*; see also: Bakker, this volume). However, we still should keep in mind, that earthen long mounds could reach lengths up to more than 200 m. Thus, in this point there is a correspondence between Northern Europe and the Middle East, as single larger structures stand out as exceptional cases.

The second point of comparison, and the clearest difference between the Northern Central European/Southern Scandinavian megaliths when compared to the North Mesopotamian Middle Eastern Early Neolithic ones, is the extremely poor elaboration in a technical sense of the former. Mostly stones are unworked, only in some cases, capstones or orthostats are cloven into two pieces (BAKKER 1992, 25–26). The layout of most chambers and barrows is rather simple, the stones, taken from the nearest vicinity or, indeed, from the very spot of erection (SCHIERHOLD 2009; SCHIERHOLD *i. pr.*; see also for the British Isles: Darvill, this volume) are set up in the simplest, round or rectangular forms. This does not mean that no or little effort was put into these structures, but the means of these efforts are rather simple and do not show much skill and specialisation. Also iconic signs incised on the stones are rather simple and remain seldom during the Neolithic period in Northern Europe (for the more elaborate iconic signs in Western Europe, see below).

Considering the workload required for these monuments, the best comparisons available come from Orkney, where 3000 to 6000 working hours per person have been calculated for the different monument types (MÜLLER 1990). This means that 10 persons working 10 hours a day would be able to finish such a structure within one to two months, surely not a colossal workload.

Looking into larger monuments, like the Flintbek LA 3 long barrow (Mischka, this volume), we see a succession of a number of building activities of smaller scale, adding up to a greater structure. Again, smaller teams seem responsible for these works. What Flintbek LA3 also shows, as do comparable other sites, like Rastorf LA 6 (STEFFENS 2009), is the lack of a pre-concieved plan for the general layout of the structure. The shape of the monument is frequently altered without a clear goal or direction. Again, it seems that these monuments gain their significance from the process of building events rather than from its final shape (FURHOLT *et al. i. pr.*).

A last feature, that is perhaps more like the Göbekli Tepe monument-type, is the clustered layout of the megaliths. The lack of size of these monuments is balanced by the tendency to be erected

in clusters, as well as by the impressive total number of megalithic monuments in the whole region, which is estimated to about 40.000 in Northern Europe.

The small size, simple forms, and lack of elaboration and workload for the single monuments, combined with a clustering of large numbers and their tendency to cover whole areas in the landscape (fig. 1), could very well be interpreted as the work of a society organised in small, autonomous groups or segments, without much specialisation, stratification or overall control. This being the quantitatively dominating structure, we now have to discuss exceptional larger structures.

In Northern Central Europe/Southern Scandinavia, the passage graves seem to be a later development, some of which show a more marked elaboration and workload. This is interpreted to be connected to an increase of overall social and political control (Müller, this volume; FURHOLT *i. pr.*) involved in the erection process, whereas the ideological purpose of these larger burial chambers is to highlight a ritual collectivity masking the rising social differentiation. Sjögren (this volume) exemplifies this when he discusses the special case of the Falbygden region, where these passage graves are highly clustered, possibly representing focal points to people from different regions in the surroundings, who gather occasionally or regularly to perform identity-shaping acts of burials and rituals

In the Northern Central European/Southern Scandinavian Neolithic, a number of enclosures could also indicate joint activities of larger groups of people (Andersen, this volume; Müller, this volume). KLATT (2009) accounts for 43 of these structures, whereas their number could be larger due to new discoveries in Denmark (Klassen *pers. comm.*). A common feature of the Northern and Central European enclosures is the intersection into smaller segments, the so-called system-ditches (ANDERSEN 1997), unconnected oblong pits, together forming the ditches of the enclosures. GESCHWINDE/RAETZEL-FABIAN (2009) interpret them as results of segmented, smaller building teams responsible for the construction of those generally rather similar structures. Thus, a layout structurally similar to the megaliths can be inferred, where we also see clusters consisting of autonomous units. The social structure at work in the construction of the enclosures of the north might be very well in line with that of the megalith-builders (Andersen, this volume).

To summarise, these observations on the structure of monumental activities in Northern Europe, we can state that, as a rule, the northern monuments show a small scale, lack of elaboration and limited workload in each single structure. Such small-scale structures are clustered together, forming groups of several small-scale monuments, or constituting

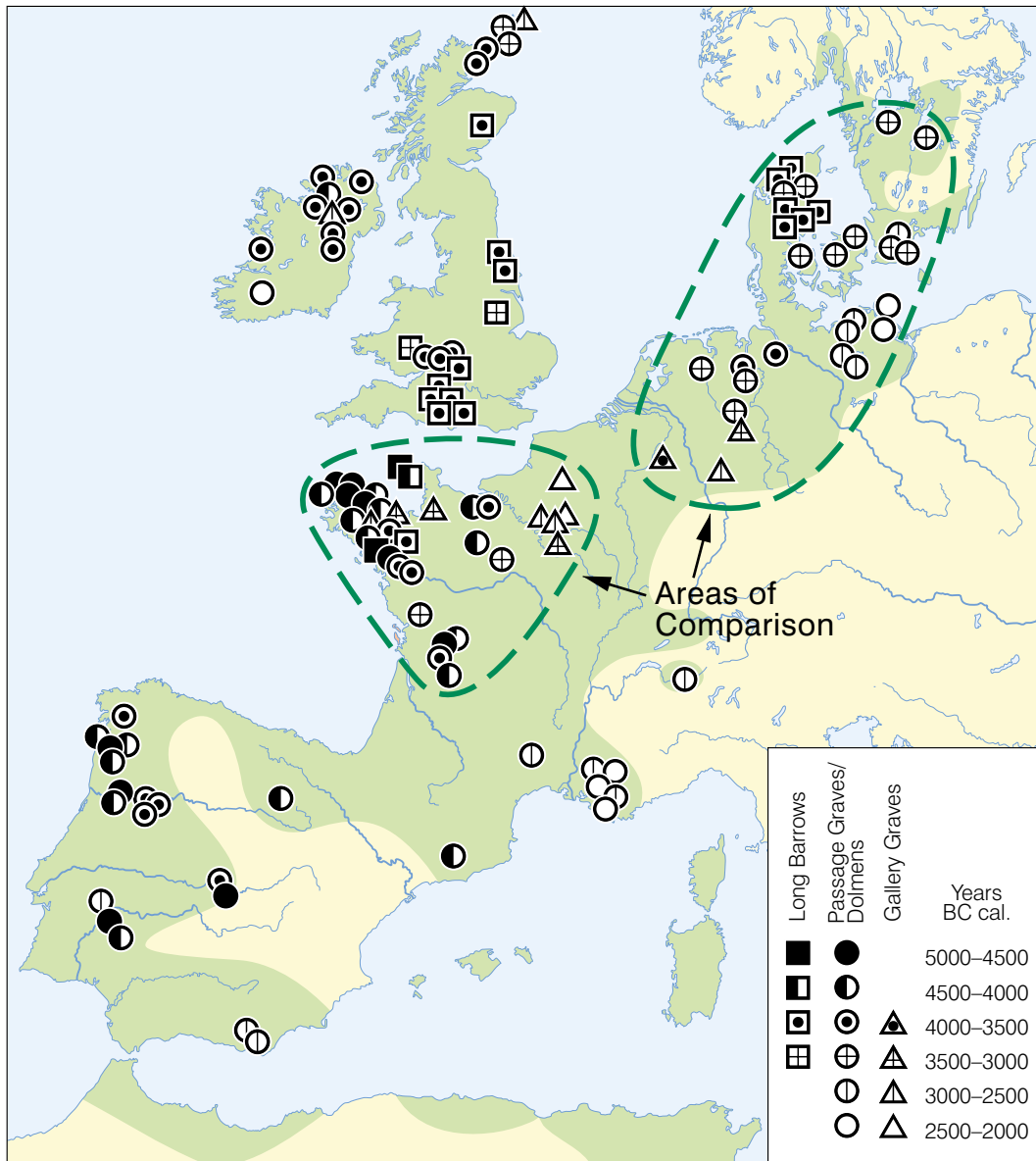


Fig. 2. The chronology of megalithic monuments in Western and Northern Europe based on Radiocarbon Dates with areas of comparison.

larger complexes, most of whom, however, can be broken down to smaller segments.

As we interpret the construction of monuments as a social act producing and reproducing social identities, these observations are coherent with the social organisation assumed in the early Neolithic period, consisting of small segmental and rather independent units in the tradition of local sedentary hunter-gatherers.

The later monuments, the passage graves, show a rise both in elaboration, workload and overall planning, indicating social changes, that are ideologically covered by a more marked collectivity in burial rites.

Northwestern and Northern Europe

The second point to discuss is the comparison of the Northwestern European and the Northern European monuments (fig. 2), in the light of the comparisons made so far. We characterised the Northern European Monuments, as small-scale, non-elaborate and processual, rather than following pre-conceived plans and connected this to a (post-mesolithic) social organisation that is exhibiting small-scale segmental and autonomous social units.

Looking into the west, immediately a number of very different monuments from the Armorican region comes to mind. First of all there are colossal

burial mounds with non- or proto-megalithic cist graves (Cassen et al. this volume), huge elaborate menhirs or standing stones (Cassen et al. this volume; Laporte, this volume; SCARRE 2010) and large and multiple passage graves incorporated into dry stone mounds.

In the fifth millennium, especially the standing stones are elaborately shaped and polished and exhibit skilful iconic signs, in this being much more comparable to the North Mesopotamian Middle Eastern monuments referred to above than to the Northern Central European/Southern Scandinavian Neolithic monuments. It is however evident that those elaborately shaped menhirs represent a phenomenon concentrated in the second and third quarter of the fifth millennium cal BC that seem to form the earliest phase of monument-building in Brittany, and what is more, they are restricted to three smaller areas, in Morbihan, Bas-Léon and Saint-Malo (SCARRE 2010). Additionally, they are accompanied by a much larger number of unworked standing stones.

Contemporary to the large menhirs are the colossal burial mounds with small closed cist graves, like St Michel, Mané er Hroëck and Tumiac (Cassen et al. this volume). These are additionally equipped with a considerable wealth of potentially prestigious jadeite and variscite objects concentrated in single burials and hoards, in total giving the impression of a clearly stratified society. These early gigantic burial mounds feature the combination of small-scale burial structures in extremely large mound structures. A somewhat comparable situation is described for the Passy-Type graves in the Paris Basin (Chambon/Thomas, this volume).

Thus a considerable effort is invested for the burial of single persons, whereas in later megalithic structures the relation between burial chamber size and mound size, that would be the relation of buried individuals and constructional efforts, gets more even.

The chronology of the French megaliths is still unclear and debated, a fact that is reflected in this volume by the opposing views of Cassen et al. and Laporte. While the first advocates a rather unilinear development, the latter argues for a higher diversity of forms in the early phase and a reduction of diversity and dominance of passage graves in the fourth millennium. Thus, despite all debate concerning the fifth millennium, a consensus seems to emerge concerning the fourth millennium, as being dominated by passage graves and later on also gallery graves. Within the group of passage graves, again there is quite a variability concerning complexity and elaboration (LE ROUX 1999, fig. 1). Simple forms contrast subdivided and transepted chambers and those with side-cells (SCARRE 2010, 142). Chambers with megalithic capstones have a simpler layout, whereas the more elaborate corbel-

vaulted ones allow for bigger chambers. The generally assumed development from simpler to more complex chamber layouts and construction procedures is mostly induced by evolutionary concepts rather than grounded on reliable dates (SCARRE 2010, 142). It is, however, important to remind of the fact that simple forms constitute the vast majority of passage grave chambers (SCARRE 2010, fig. 6.6). There seems to be the danger that the minority of extraordinary huge, complex and elaborate structures wrongfully dominate our picture of the overall structure of monumental activities. A great number of these extraordinary structures seem to date around the midst of the fifth millennium, leaving the following phases much less impressive, when seen in the light of the whole spectrum of recorded structures.

Trying to summarise, among the earliest monuments in Brittany, there are remarkable huge and elaborate structures, that have no parallels in Northern Central Europe/Southern Scandinavia. What is more, there seems to be a wide variety of monument types, ranging from worked and unworked standing stones to Earthen Long Barrows with cist graves and maybe also passage graves of different layouts.

However we have to keep in mind, that the Armorican tumulus gigantesque are only part of the development of earthen long barrows concentrated in the Parisien basin: the Passy type of monument might also hint at the question, yet not answered, how important the difference between wood and stone constructions are from a receptional point of view (see Darvill, this volume).

In the following period, however, it seems as if since the late fifth and during the fourth millennium cal BC, the Armorican Neolithic monuments are more and more comparable to the Northern European ones concerning scale, complexity and elaboration, because they seem to have lost these qualities when compared to the evidence of the fifth millennium. Laporte (this volume) points out both processual and undirected building processes (like in Souc'h, later fifth millennium), as well as a segmental organisation of the erection of larger passage dry-stone mounds, like in Péré C or Champ-Châlon A and C.

On the other hand it cannot be denied, that in the fourth millennium Armorican passage graves of Western Europe, despite a dominance in numbers of smaller and simpler forms, we can still observe a considerably higher degree of complexity of layout and elaboration. Laporte (this volume), suggests a clear involvement of specialisation in the processing of dry stone mounds and thus an overall organisation behind the segmental division of labour. Although this of course is debateable, it matches the

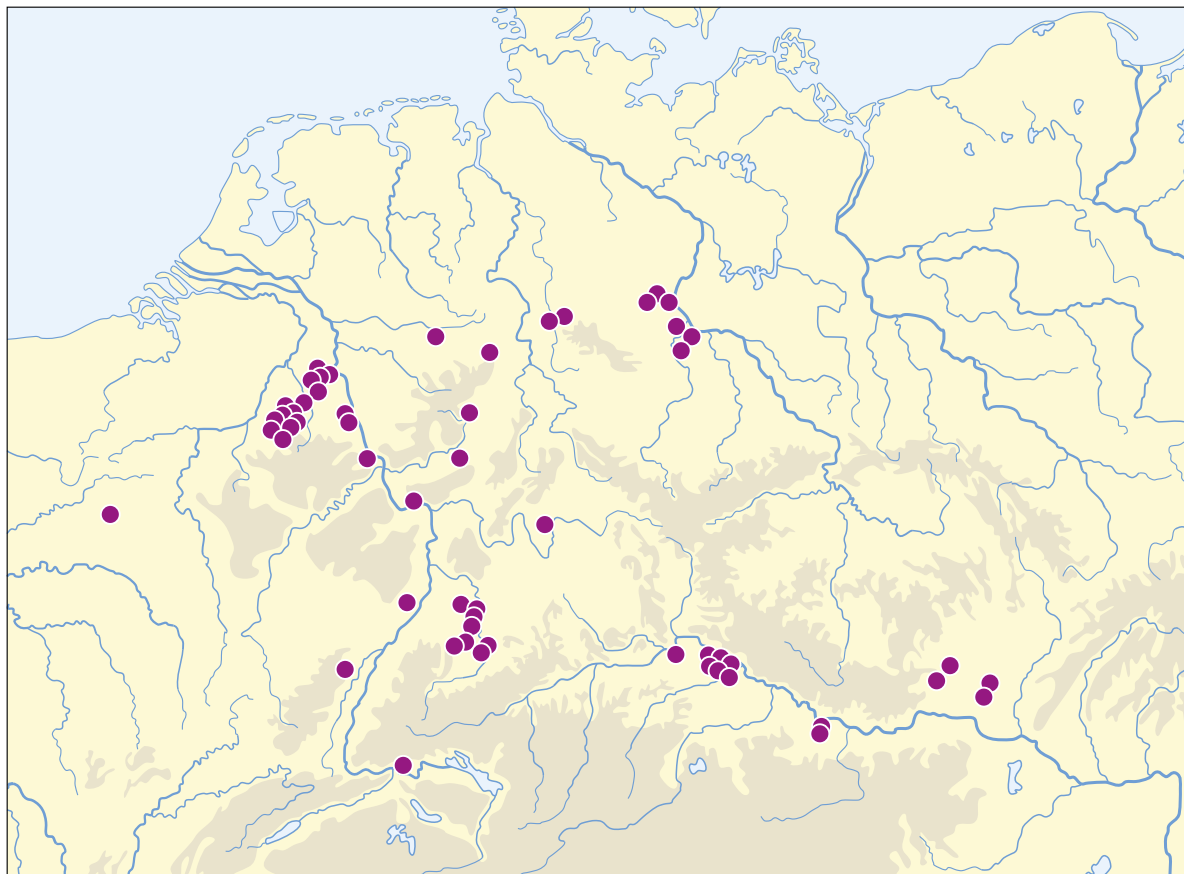


Fig. 3 The location of LBK enclosures, irrespective of their function as fortifications or monuments (after MEYER/RAETZEL-FABIAN 2006, fig. 2; additions after SCHWARZ 2003, 24; LÜNING 1988, fig. 1; JEUNESSE/LEFRANC 1999).

overall assessment of higher complexity and elaboration and the tradition deriving from the extremely complex system of the early to mid-5th millennium cal BC.

Prelude: The Earliest Non-Domestic Monuments in Europe

The monuments of the 5th and 4th millennium cal BC in Northern and Northwestern Europe should be considered in the context of older structures of LBK and Post-LBK/Lengyel Context in the sixth and fifth millennium in Central and Eastern Central Europe, many of which already exhibit distinct traits characteristic to the former.

It seems clear that the enclosure, being the only archaeologically traceable monument of the Danubian Neolithic, derives from a symbolic transformation of settlement fortification structures (as summarised by HÖCKMANN 1990; ANDERSEN 1997). These are frequently identified in Early Neolithic contexts, from Turkey to Central Europe, although they are quantitatively a rather seldom phe-

nomenon. Following the definition given above, a fortification ditch, wall or palisade surrounding a domestic site cannot be called a monument, unless it shows a greater symbolic load and/or a loss of functionality. Indications of this could be cases where:

- ditches are used for burials
- enclosures are doubled
- enclosures show frequent and /or wide gaps
- enclosures are placed outside the domestic area

Multiple ditches and burials/deposition of human bones in ditches are known from southeastern Europe (HOFMANN et al. 2006; MÜLLER-SCHESSEL et al. 2009), as well as from the LBK (Schletz: WINDL 1997; Vaihingen/Enz: KRAUSE 1998; Herxheim: ZEEB-LANZ et al. 2007), but in these cases it is assumed that these burials/interred human bones represent but a short period of the settlements' use.

Besides a number of doubtful specimens (LÜNING 1988; PETRASCH 1990, 488 ff; ANDERSEN 1997, 174; MEYER/RAETZEL-FABIAN 2006), the earliest

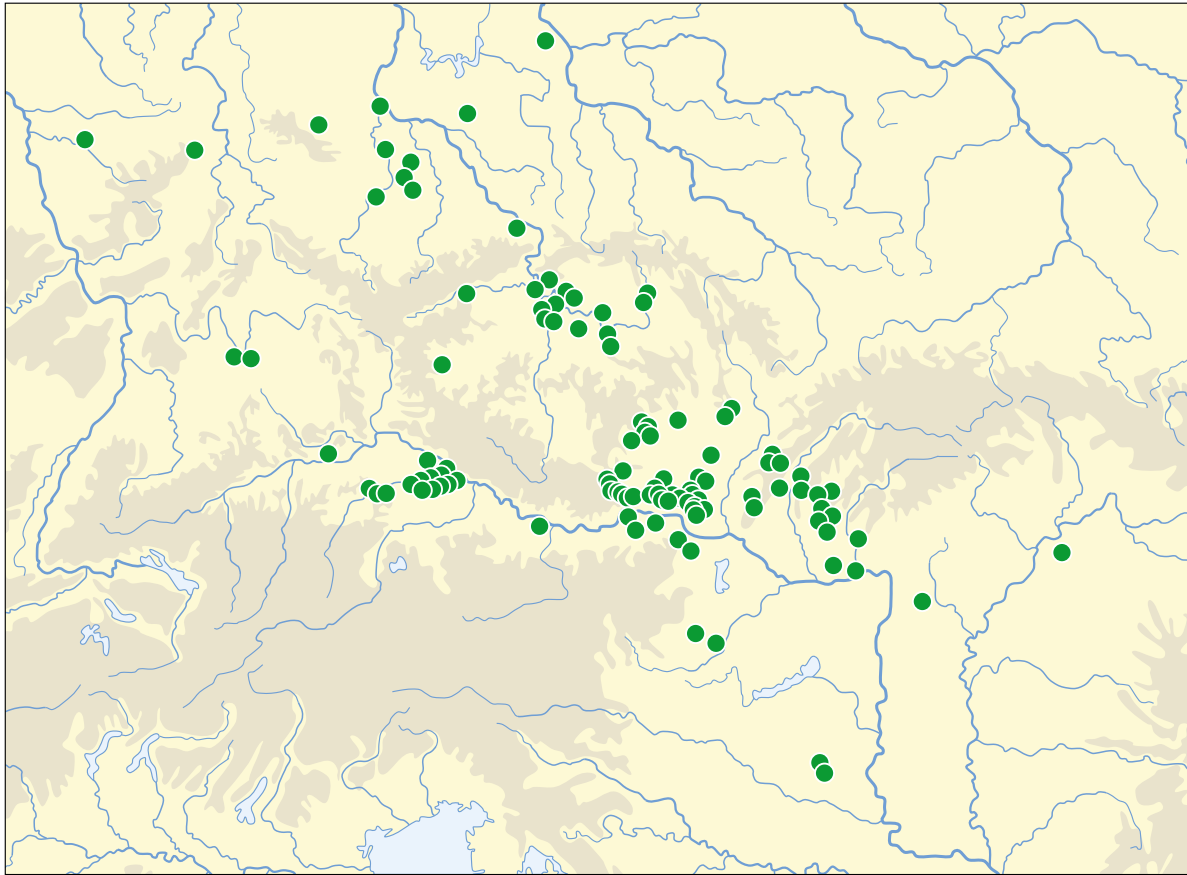


Fig. 4. The location of the 5th millennium circular enclosures of Central Europe (after MELICHAR/NEUBAUER 2010, fig. 2), a tradition derived from Late LBK practices?

enclosures that are definitely no settlement fortifications are also known from the LBK (5500 – 4900 cal BC) in Central Europe. Enclosures of LBK context, be they fortifications or not, are clearly concentrated in the Western area, especially in the Rhineland and beyond (fig. 3)¹.

A second important observation is that non-domestic enclosures are also concentrated in the West of the LBK area. Only very few do without doubt exhibit no settlement remains inside, like Langweiler 9 (STEHLI 1994, 98; LÜNING 1997, 47), whereas such a lack of settlement remains seems highly probable in the cases of Langweiler 8 and 3 (BOELICKE et al. 1988; STEHLI 1994, 107 f.), Weißweiler 17 (KRAHN 2006, 134 f.) and Jüchen-Hochneukirch (MEYER 2003, 447). In a much larger number of cases, it is assumed that the enclosures were placed on top of earlier settlements (ANDERSEN 1997, 174). These early enclosures are far from uniform and show diverse traits concerning shape, section form, con-

structional elements and so on. One distinct constructional feature, that is again observed in the western parts of the LBK distribution area, is the segmentation of ditches, as JEUNESSE/LEFRANC (1999) could identify at Rosheim: the segmentation of the ditch into so-called system-ditches, a prominent and significant feature of many later Michelsberg enclosures and nearly all Funnel Beaker enclosures, as was discussed above. Similar features were discovered at other western LBK enclosures, like in Herxheim (SCHMIDT 2004) or assumed for Langweiler 8 and 9 as well as Stephansposching (JEUNESSE/LEFRANC 1999, 51). Although the ditches in these latter enclosures looked continuous, they are the outcome of overlapping system ditches and recuttings (see also ANDERSEN 1997, 174). Real segmented ditches are also known from several later LBK enclosures in the West, like Darion in Belgium (CAHEN et al. 1987), Menneville in the northeastern French Aisne-District (JEUNESSE 1996, 253),

¹ In 1988, this pattern was explained by diverse research methods (LÜNING 1988; PETRASCH 1990), but even now, 20

years later, the situation remains unchanged (see MEYER/RAETZEL-FABIAN 2006, fig. 2).

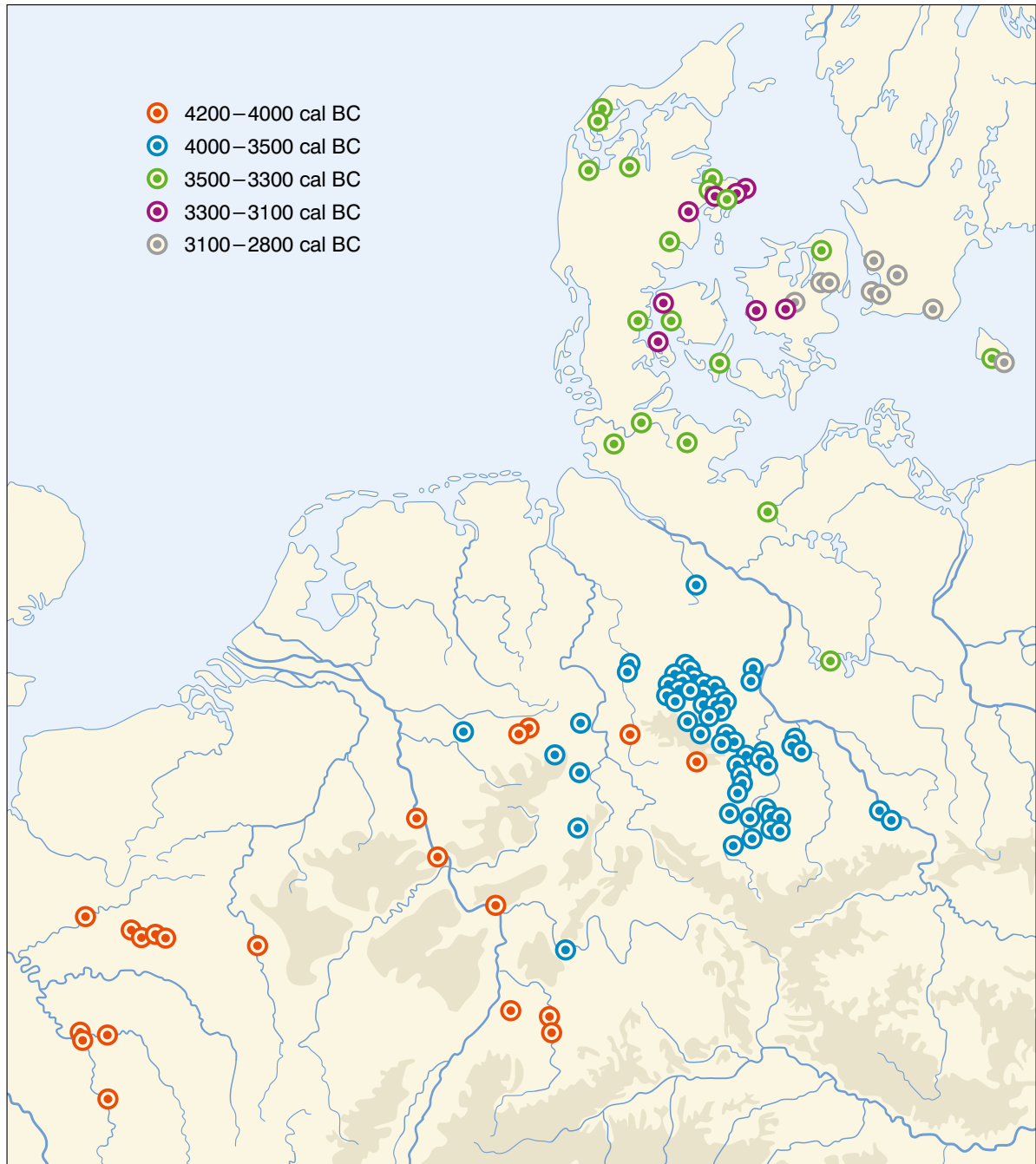


Fig. 5. The location and chronology of the second, western tradition of enclosures, connected to the archaeological units of Chasséen, Michelsberg and Funnel Beakers (after MÜLLER 2010).

and possibly also Bietigheim-Bissingen in South-western Germany (HÖCKMANN 1990, fig. 9.3). Sites like Balloy, that could be dated into a Cerny-Context (JEUNESSE 1996, 254ff.) seem to indicate a line of tradition from the late LBK to the Michelsberg-enclosures.

On the other hand it is possible to trace a line of tradition from these earliest monumental en-

losures of the latest 6th millennium in Western Central Europe to the Central and Eastern European enclosures of the first half of the 5th millennium, among them the Circular Enclosures, the Kreisgrabenanlagen of the Middle Neolithic (fig. 4; MEYER/RAETZEL-FABIAN 2006; PETRASCH 1990; MELICHAR/NEUBAUER 2010, 17; BERTEMES et al. 2004).

Most of these 5th millennium circular enclosures

have more than one entrance, but the majority does not show system-ditches. They are often connected to, or placed inside settlements, but show themselves no houses in the interior (PETRASCH 1990). Thus, circular structures like the one discovered within the LBK-settlement of Nieder-Mörlen (LÜNING 2009) could be seen as predecessors. Other authors see the small geometric late LBK enclosures, like Langweiler 8 as prototypes (MEYER/RAETZEL-FABIAN 2006, 17; PETRASCH 1990, 488 ff.; MATUSCHIK 1999, 1065).

This means that enclosures are the earliest monuments in Europe, and they emerged at the end of the LBK period, around 5000 cal BC in a rather restricted area of western Central Europe. They may be interpreted as a transformation of a traditional functional feature of domestic settlements. As we believe that the organisation of labour both reflect and produce social relations, the presence of system ditches already in the late LBK, in its western periphery is an important observation.

It might therefore be speculated, whether this segmentation element of the late western LBK enclosures could be connected to a similar segmented settlement pattern as inferred from the Wohnplatzmodell- or Hofplatzmodell in the Western LBK (LÜNING/STEHLI 1994, 86 ff.), that is the autonomy

of single households through successive periods. If this is the case, such a structure could be seen as an indication of social developments constituting a first step towards the phenomenon of Michelsberg, Gatersleben, Baalberge and the Early TRB in the late 5th and early 4th millennium that has recently been called “the other Neolithic” (JEUNESSE 2010, 46; see below). Towards the east and south-east of Central Europe, in both periods, during the LBK and during the fifth millennium with its circular enclosures, such a segmentation of the ditches is much less distinct, an observation that would correspond to a social organisation based on larger and more structured villages common in the eastern and southeastern Neolithic tradition (MÜLLER 2010).

The LBK enclosures, to summarise, might be the predecessors for two traditions: Firstly, the circular enclosures of eastern Central Europe and secondly the segmented enclosures starting with the Cerny-type enclosures since 4500 cal BC. The first variant is rather short lived, as all structures might be dated between 4700 and 4500 cal BC (MELICHAR/NEUBAUER 2010, 17). The second variant is the starting point of a longer lasting tradition that is also reaching central and Northern Europe in the 4th Millennium (fig. 5).

What about the “NW-European Neolithic”?

The Northwestern and Northern European Neolithic Monuments, dominated by megalithic grave structures, long barrows (Rassmann, this volume; Darvill, this volume) and enclosures are often treated as a unity, as opposed to the “Danubian” world to the southeast (and in the preceding period).

Such a view should, in our opinion be challenged from two sides: Firstly, there are marked differences between 5th millennium and 4th millennium monuments in Northwestern Europe that correspond to the differences between the “Danubian Cultures” in the 5th millennium and the following period in the 4th millennium in Central Europe. Thus, we are talking about supra-regional developments that seem to take place more or less synchronously in regions with different lengths of Neolithic traditions. Secondly, the differences between France and Scandinavia should be emphasised.

We have seen above, that the first real monuments in Europe emerged in the Rhine area around 5000 cal BC, enclosures derived from and still very much connected to settlement structures. In the first half of the 5th millennium, however, monuments for the

first time become a supra-regional phenomenon. Central Europe is dominated by enclosures and circular enclosures, in north-eastern France there are Cerny-type enclosures. In western France, we see long barrows, menhirs and maybe already the first passage graves. Passy-type monuments could be seen as a hybrid between the enclosure type monument to the east and the long barrow type monument to the west². The eastern monuments are still clearly connected to the sphere of the settlement, whereas in the west, the settlements become less visible, the monuments more distinctly “non-domestic”.

Among these early monuments, a number of quite colossal and the most elaborate ones are counted. At the same time, the tendency towards smaller monuments (but in many cases with more elaborated burial chambers), as well as the tendency towards a segmented organisation of monuments, already emerging in the western Late LBK is also seen in Cerny-enclosures starting around 4500 cal BC. In the 4th millennium, the tendency towards less elaboration and collosality, or the segmenta-

² If those reconstructions are true that show combinations of smaller burial mounds connected to or enclosed by ditches and palisades (see DUHAMEL et al. 1997).

tion of colossality is clearly gaining ground, both in Northwestern and Central Europe, whereas it remained dominant in Northern Europe at the turn from Mesolithic to Neolithic Period. One clear sign of this development is the reduction of the visible monumental space (the barrow) and a relative enlargement of the functional space (the burial chambers).

To summarise, in the early and middle 5th millennium we have signs of both elaborate and colossal monuments in Northern France and Central Europe corresponding to signs of larger and more stratified social organisations. At this time, Britain

and Northern Europe is dominated by small-scale groups with a Mesolithic subsistence economy. Towards the end of the 5th millennium, the stratified, large-scale societies disappear, and a tendency towards smaller or segmented monuments appears, now also reaching the British Isles (Darvill, this volume; Scarre, this volume; Bradley, this volume). Northern Europe still does not know any monuments until the first Earthen Long Barrows appear around 3700 cal BC (Rassmann, this volume; Furholt, this volume; Müller, this volume), a phenomenon that links that region to the British Isles (Rassmann, this volume).

The “Other” Neolithic

Megalithic monuments appearing in Brittany since the early 5th millennium cal BC (Cassen et al. this volume; Laporte this volume), non-megalithic long barrows of the Passy-type recorded in the Parisian Basin at the same time (Chambon / Thomas this volume), accompanied by segmented enclosures, have become the emblematic features of the North-Western and Northern European Neolithic with its scarcity of visible settlement sites and house structures and marked funerary / non-domestic monuments. This is often seen in contrast to the Danubian Neolithic with the LBK, Rössen and related phenomena (SHERRATT 1990; HODDER 1992). Different ecological conditions outside the fertile loess soils (HODDER 1992, 67) and a greater role of indigenous hunter-gatherers (SHERRATT 1990) have been proposed as an explanation for the apparently different social structures. Indeed, as we have argued above, the structure of the great majority of monuments in Northern and Western Europe clearly point towards a social organisation that very much resembles those of small hunter-gatherer bands. Cassen et al. (this volume) and Chambon / Thomas (this volume) point out, that the monumental innovations mentioned are indeed rooted in Mesolithic traditions.

Models that emphasise the difference between a “Danubian” and a NW-European Neolithic normally seem to overlook the parallelism of developments in many key processes of these regions. The emergence of monuments so prominently emphasised in the case of 5th millennium Western Europe has its parallels in the first monuments in Central Europe. Marked characteristics of the “NW-European Neolithic”, like the scarcity of substantial settlement sites or house structures, the use of less fertile soils, these fundamental social and economic traits are also observed in central Europe since approximately 4200 cal BC, after the end of Rössen, Bischheim and related archaeological units. The phenomenon was recently coined “the other

Neolithic” by JEUNESSE (2010, 46), and it exhibits a lack of large villages or even of substantial house structures, the lack of extra-mural burial grounds, or indeed the scarcity of regular single graves, being replaced by collective graves. Additionally, the decrease of symbolism on material culture, most markedly illustrated by the inconspicuously decorated pottery characteristic for Michelsberg has its parallels in the Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic of the Northern Area (Furholt, this volume). On the other hand there is the continuation of non-domestic monuments like the enclosures (fig. 5), that we now find both in Western Europe and in the northern part of Central Europe. It is the presence of megalithic grave monuments in the North and West of Europe that remains the most marked difference as compared to Central Europe (fig. 2).

The case of an “Other Neolithic” and the emergence of monuments

Especially the economic and social dimension of this “otherness” can now be better described concerning northern Central Europe in the 4th millennium cal BC.

The articles of this volume do not so much deal with new research about the economic and demographic base of Funnel Beaker Societies in northern Central Europe, including the reconstruction of the impact of monumental building activities on the landscape. First of all it seems to be clear, that we are dealing with a mosaic of different developments and different man-environment-relations in Northern Central and Northern European regions. The earliest evidence for cultivates and domesticates varies between 4100 and 3600 cal BC quite considerably from region to region, as well as evidence for clearances and pasture activities in pollen analyses. Where there is such palynological evidence, it points to clearances near the Middle Trave Valley in Eastern Holstein already around 4300 cal

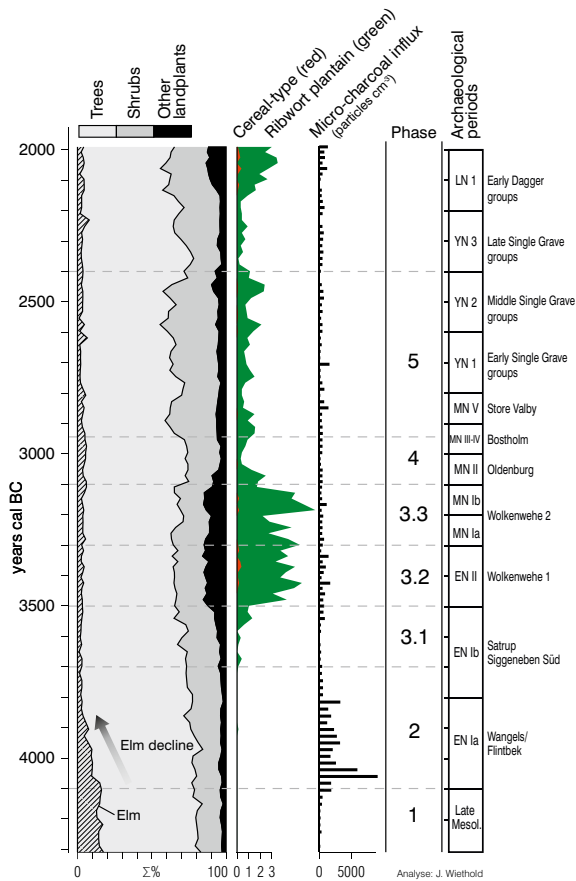


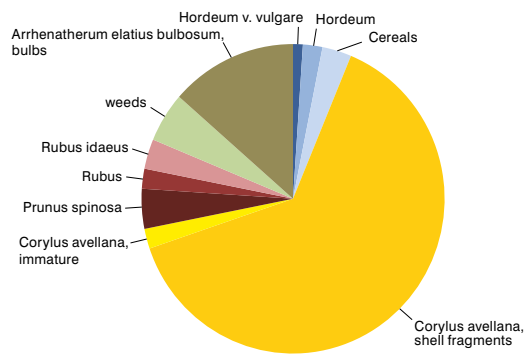
Fig. 6. The opening of the landscape reflected in the record of Lake Belau. After a period in which charcoal played an important role, around 3500 cal BC, the imprints of a new agricultural system on vegetation are visible.

BC, while in 60 kms distance at the Belauer Lake clearances are starting around 3800 cal BC (MÜLLER et al. in print).

On the whole, the centuries between 4300 and 3700 cal BC are not as pronounced in their differences as was formerly thought. This might also be due to the fact that Mesolithic groups in the Ertebølle period had already practiced some kind of land opening and “Niederwaldwirtschaft” (KLOOSS subm.) and developed land use patterns, which were quite similar to Early Neolithic ones.

The newly dated pollen profile of Lake Belau (fig. 6) yields information of the changing character of early horti- and agriculture in one of the northern regions (KIRLEIS et al. 2011; WIETHOLD 1998; DÖFLER/FEESER submit.). As the beginning of the elm-decline around 4100 cal BC coincides with an increase of micro-charcoal influx, a first clear evidence of human impact is provided. Within the more or less closed woodland cover generally high values of micro-charcoal indicate a form of fire management in connection with wood pasture and included pollarding (Schneitelwirtschaft). Starting

Albersdorf-Brutkamp LA 5: tomb, n=96



Oldenburg LA 77: settlement, n=1009

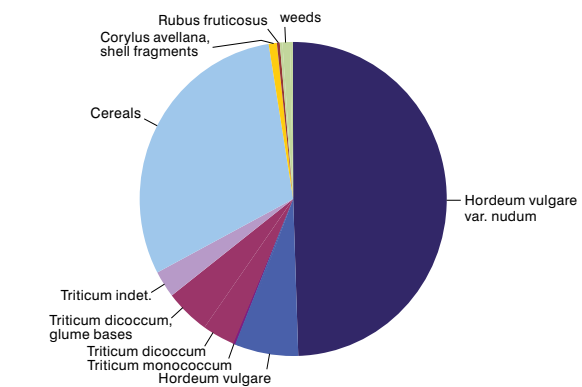


Fig. 7. The differences in plant deposition between megaliths (Brutkamp), and domestic sites (Oldenburg) (after KIRLEIS/KLOOSS submitted, fig. 2; graphic: W. Kirleis).

around 3700 cal BC, the introduction of the crooked plough allowed the cultivation of larger areas, resulting in increasing importance of ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and grass (*Poaceae* ex cl. Cereal-type) pollen, as well as lower micro-charcoal values. The sharp increase in ribwort plantain around 3500 cal BC is thought to reflect the local establishment of agricultural fields in the vicinity of Lake Belau, which agrees with regular occurrences of cereal-type pollen in the record. Results of an approach to model and quantify the regional vegetation composition indicate an opening of the landscape of up to 40 % of the total land cover (MÜLLER et al. in print).

After changes in the pollen record around 3300 cal BC, which might indicate shifts in land use strategies, the time period 3100 – 2950 cal BC is characterized by reduced human activity and the recovery of woodland, which suggests fundamental changes in the Neolithic societies.

Over all, the technological innovation of the crooked plough was obviously one of the main driv-

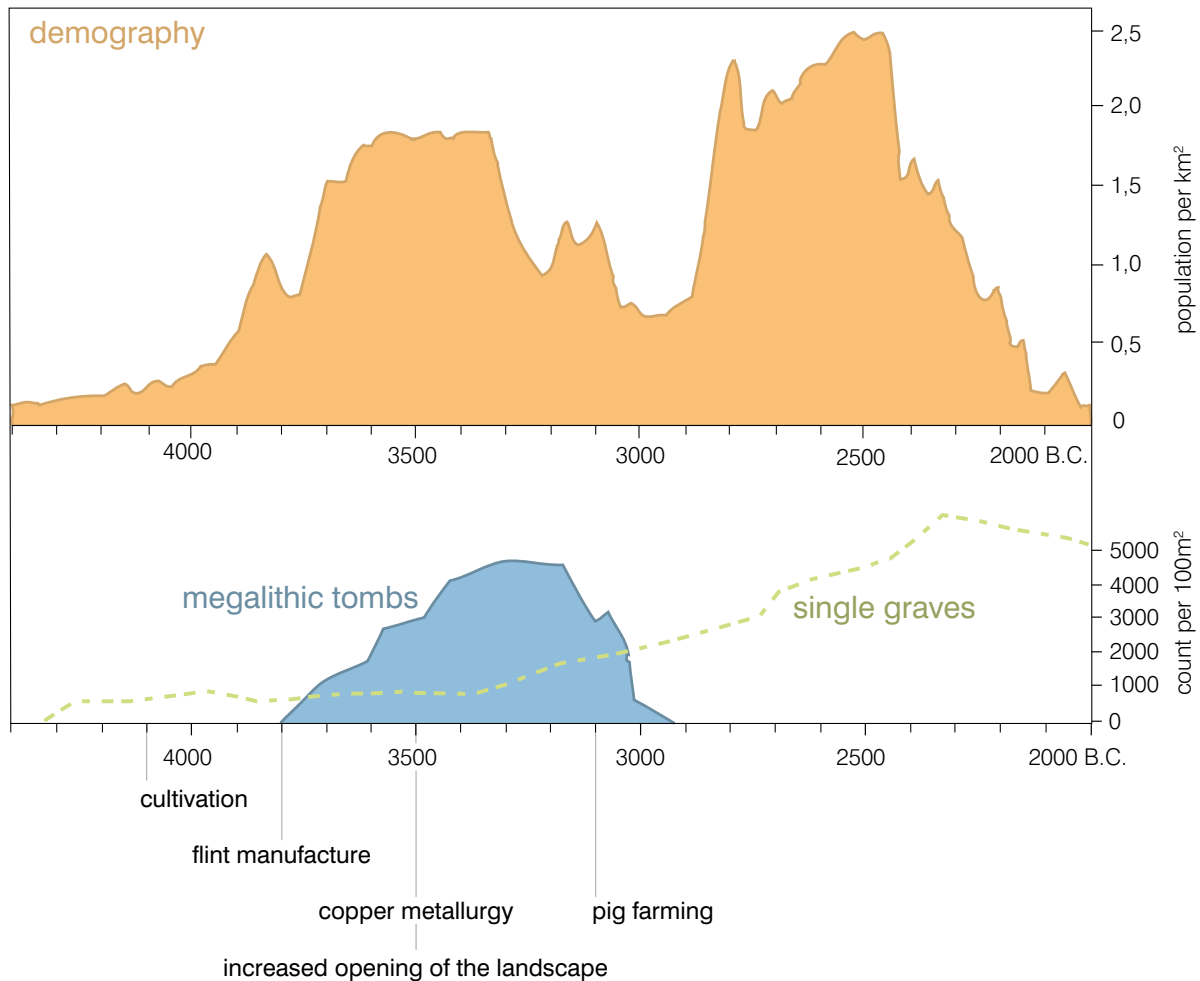


Fig. 8 The quantity of radiometric dating in Southern Scandinavia and North Germany might indicate population densities as well as the construction of burial mounds. The differences are used to create a model of the demographic development and burial construction (data base: PERSSON 1995; PERSSON 1999; RADON).

ing forces to further economic and demographic changes and enable the “northern” communities to build and re-build “places of memory transfer”, thus megaliths and causewayed enclosures, sites without utilitarian purposes and thus monuments in the sense referred to above. Archaeobotanical research underlines the observations, which were made on the basis of the pollen-record. The evidence of cereals or cereal-related weeds paints a similar picture (KIRLEIS et al. subm.; KIRLEIS et al. 2011; REGNELL/SJÖGREN 2006). Remains of domesticates from Neolithic sites between 4100–3800 cal BC are very sparse. Between 4100 and 3800 cal BC we do not have a single cereal find from a settlement except cereal impressions on pottery. It is not quite clear, but most possibly the imprints stem from imported cereals. Not until the Early Neolithic IB, after 3800 cal BC, are cereal finds from different sites present, when at the same time ribwort plantain oc-

curs regularly in the pollen records, both indicating an agricultural expansion. The main input of archaeobotanical evidence for cultivation belongs to the late Early Neolithic and the Middle Neolithic. Besides local and regional variations, the main crop plants in the TRB were naked barley (*Hordeum v. nudum*) and emmer (*Triticum dicoccum*). In contrast to domestic sites, already gathered archaeobotanical evidence from different ritual sites reveals the role of non-cultivates for the society (fig. 7). As an example, the site of the megalithic tomb of Albersdorf-Brutkamp is mainly characterized by charred remains of non-cultivated plants that may stem from fire clearing as ritual activity or hint at fruit gathering related to the burial ritual.

The diverse impact of agriculture on the Northern Central European and Southern Scandinavian landscape can also be recognized by the relatively

small number of findings per liter soil from domestic sites (KIRLEIS et al. *subm.*; REGNELL/SJÖGREN 2006). In contrast to other prehistoric and historic periods FBC agriculture played only a small role, if these small percentages are not resulting from other depositional processes. However, the continu-

ation of foraging activities, the establishment of only small scale agriculture and the diverse opening of the landscape rendered a surplus, which obviously was driven by ritual activities, to maintain the knowledge and memory of ideologies (fig. 8), through the construction and use of monuments.

Synthesis: Monuments and Societies of the 5th and 4th Millennium cal BC

To try a larger synthesis, concerning the development of social formations as reflected in architectural features, a general trajectory can be drawn from the south-eastern European Neolithic with organised, even clustered settlement plans, towards a higher autonomy of the single household unit in Central Europe (MÜLLER 2010), culminating in the „Hofplatzmodell“ of Western Central Europe. In Western Europe, no structured settlement concentrations are known at all, pointing to an even greater autonomy of core social units, whose nature we cannot directly detect.

The first monuments built in Central and Eastern Europe between 5000 and 4500 cal BC, that is, enclosures and circled enclosures, are large and elaborate communal collaborations with an overall design, indicating centralised social control mechanisms towards larger groups of people who cooperate to erect these monuments. The same seems to be true for the earliest monuments in Northwestern Europe, namely the menhirs and burial mounds of Brittany in the early and middle fifth millennium, as well as in the Passy-type long barrows in Northern Central France. This means, that towards the midst of the fifth millennium, a supra-regional phenomenon of non-domestic monuments appear, enclosures in Central Europe, menhirs and burial mounds in Western France, and hybrid forms, like the enclosure-mound constructions of the Passy type in Central France.

These extra-domestic monuments have in common that they exhibit a high degree of work-load, elaboration, complexity and central planning. Antecedents for the enclosures might be the late LBK enclosures, and the menhirs and burial mounds can draw on comparable, although smaller phenomena in the Mesolithic context of Brittany (Cassen et al., *this volume*). Despite the overall planning implied by these kinds of monuments, there are no indications for a marked social hierarchisation or specialisation in Central Europe, to the contrary, the first tendencies towards a segmentation of the building activities are to be observed in the Western LBK enclosures, which corresponds to the autonomous households inferred by the „Hofplatzmodell“.

Indications for social hierarchisation come from the two outermost regions in question, Brittany and the Carpathian Basin. Here, concentrations of new, precious artefact and material types, the cop-

per and jadeite axes, indicate monopolisations of social and economic power. Chambon and Thomas (*this volume*) also stress the presence of more stratified societies in the area of the Paris Basin, deduced from high workload for a small number of burials. These are exhibiting differentiated and repetitive social roles which involve the emphasis on hunters, but not so much a special inequality in burial equipments. Especially interesting is also the marked gender differentiation Chambon and Thomas (*this volume*) are able to point out, as we again observe a parallel to the Eastern European situation, where the first gender-specific burial rites are recorded on the contemporary South-Eastern European Copper Age Varna and Tiszapolgar cemeteries (LICHTER 2001).

The phenomenon of social stratification can draw upon a long and clearly traceable tradition in South-Eastern Europe (CHAPMAN 1989), but it seems to appear rather surprisingly in Western Europe. Although distinct features may derive from Mesolithic traditions (Cassen et al., *this volume*), the marked signs of social stratification first materialises in the context of an Early Neolithic package. Because of this, we would interpret the Breton evidence as a result of innovations coming with Neolithic ideology as an impulse, but the specificity of the social and monumental development must be rooted in the Mesolithic societies.

Both Cassen et al. (*this volume*) and Chambon/Thomas (*this volume*) emphasise the importance of hunting-related symbols and elements in the early monuments in Western Europe. Besides the already cited investigations of KIRLEIS/KLOOSS (*in press*) for northern Germany, RUDEBECK (2010) points out the strength of foraging, or Mesolithic, symbols and elements in the earliest monument types for Southern Sweden. Additionally, we would interpret the tendency towards a higher autonomy of small social units (or the household unit), that we observed in the trajectory from clustered, structured settlement places in southeastern Europe to single house units in Central Europe to the almost complete invisibility of settlement sites in Northern and Western Europe (*s. above*), as a strengthening of Mesolithic heritage in social organisation.

Thus, the development of the “other Neolithic” in the late fifth and early fourth millennium cal BC that exhibits a less intensive agriculture, the loss of

symbols in everyday, utilitarian artefacts, small, light settlement sites with non-traceable houses, a segmental and much less elaborate organisation of monumental activities, could be seen as an intensification of the Mesolithic traditions at the cost of the south-eastern Neolithic identities.

In accordance to this, the fourth-millennium monuments, especially those newly appearing on the British Isles and in Northern Europe, are small-scale, simple and compatible to societies still dominated by Mesolithic identities.

If we should summarise what we have said about “Monumentality and Social Differentiation”, and thus the main topic of our DFG – priority program, we would state that the first European monuments were erected as the first socially stratified societies were evolving in European history, that is during the 5th millennium cal BC, although not all early monuments are a reflection of such structures. In

the next period – the 4th millennium cal BC – the social stratification is distinctly reduced, and this is reflected by the construction of much smaller and simpler monuments. In our primary study area, the Northern European lowlands and southern Scandinavia, small, segmental egalitarian households engage in small-scale monumental activities in order to perform small-scale collective identities. The Danish/Northern German megaliths show a tendency towards a higher complexity at the end of the 4th millennium, mirrored in the establishment of larger villages (JENSEN 2006, 287), but this development does not last. Especially, when we compare the Danish/Northern German evidence with that of Western Europe, Southern Europe or the Middle East, it may be stated that lasting social stratification never really happened before the Bronze Age (KRISTIANSEN/LARSSON 2005), or even before the iron age.

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